

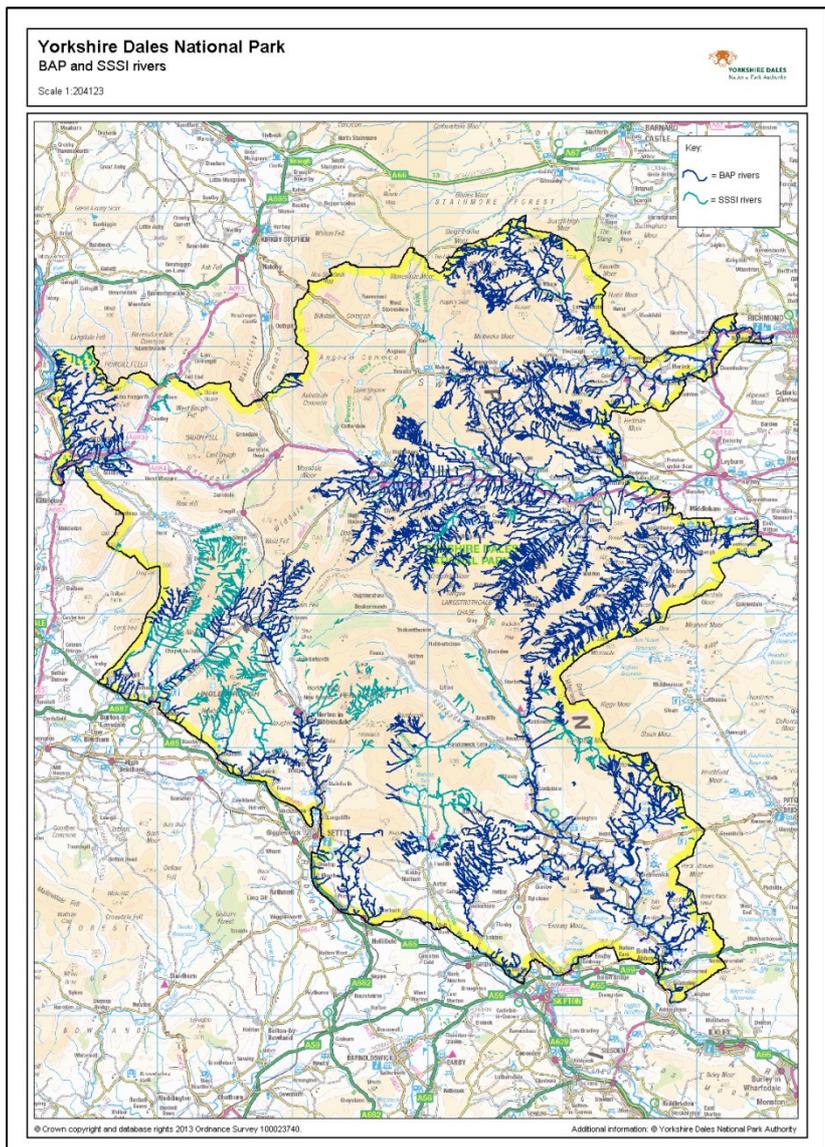
Yorkshire Dales Rivers Conference 2013

The Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Forum decided to host a conference this year in order to progress the work on rivers within the National Park.

The biodiversity forum has a central role in progressing the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)¹ for the Yorkshire Dales National Park, which aims to conserve and enhance biodiversity within National Park. Rivers are a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitat. For a stretch of river to be defined as a BAP river, there are various qualifying features, for example if it is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), or classed as an active shingle river, or contains six or more Annex II Habitats Directive species, such as Otter, Atlantic Salmon or Bullhead. Prior to the conference all of the qualifying BAP rivers (excluding headwaters) were mapped, to be used during the conference. The map can be seen below. The dark blue lines are those designated as BAP rivers, and the turquoise lines are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) rivers, also BAP rivers. It shows that we have a lot of important rivers within the National Park.

Many of the rivers within the Yorkshire Dales National Park are in good ecological status, according to the Water Framework Directive (WFD), but there are also a number of waterbodies that have some significant problems, including diffuse pollution, point source pollution and physical modifications, combined with decreased river-floodplain connectivity and a lack of riparian woodland. The LBAP is just one way that conservation or restoration work can be directed.

The Yorkshire Dales Rivers Conference was held on the 1st November 2013 at Craven College in Skipton. We had fantastic attendance with around 65 representatives from numerous river related organisations and specialists in and around the National Park. The morning of the conference consisted of presentations on four topics: BAP rivers - National Policy and Legislation; Peatland Stream Ecosystems; Catchment Management in Yorkshire Water; and The River Ribble Trust Pilot Project. In the afternoon, all conference delegates chose to attend a workshop on one of the following themes: Catchment management; river restoration; biodiversity assessment and monitoring; biosecurity and invasive species; and engaging local communities, farmers, landowners and river users. The conference had two main aims, firstly to develop new targets for the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) rivers, and secondly, to bring together for the first time all of the organisations involved in



¹ A copy of the Yorkshire Dales Biodiversity Action Plan can be found at: <http://www.natureinthedales.org.uk/bap>

river management to coordinate the work, share information and develop better partnerships. The intention of the conference was that it was just a starting point, for more joined up river work within the Yorkshire Dales.

The forum think that the conference was a big success. We have brought together a lot of individual people and organisations with the aim to work together and gain a better understanding of the work everyone is doing. During the workshops we got some great ideas for new BAP targets, which the Biodiversity Forum will be drafting shortly. Several organisations are working towards creating an interactive map of all the river based projects within the Yorkshire Dales National Park, so that we can all keep track of what is being achieved. It was identified at the conference there is a need for a non-native invasive species working group, which will be established. Finally, we are looking at a landscape-scale river restoration project, which will require numerous organisations working together. And this is just the start!

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